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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 078366

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING FOR TIMOR-LESTE

11. This Travel Warning updates information regarding the security situation in Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor). The Department of State advises U.S. citizens of the continuing potential for violent civil unrest in Timor-Leste and urges U.S. citizens to consider carefully the risks of travel to Timor-Leste at this time. Americans currently in Timor-Leste should evaluate carefully their safety and security situation in light of this Travel Warning. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued on February 15, 2008.

12. While politically-related civil unrest in Timor-Leste has diminished and security has improved, the potential for violence remains. Security conditions could deteriorate without warning, and foreigners may be specifically targeted. U.S. citizens should consider carefully the risks of travel to Timor-Leste. Those already in Timor-Leste should exercise caution, limit movements to the extent possible, and maintain a high level of security awareness while moving around in Dili; be alert to the potential for violence, and avoid demonstrations, large gatherings, and areas where disturbances have occurred. Demonstrations can occur anywhere, and especially at or near symbols and institutions of the Government of Timor-Leste, including government buildings and houses belonging to prominent politicians. Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

13. Since April 2006, Timor-Leste has experienced outbreaks of politically-related civil unrest, and the risk of further violent unrest continues. In 2007 violent disturbances broke out in Dili and in the Eastern districts of Baucau and Viqueque following the President's announcement of a new government. In February 2008 rebels carried out an unsuccessful assassination attempt against the President and Prime Minister. The attackers subsequently surrendered, and the security situation has remained calm since then. However,

indiscriminate communal violence and criminal violence have occurred, and they can occur unexpectedly throughout the country.

¶4. Areas in Dili affected by violence have included the international airport and its surroundings and the areas around internally displaced persons camps near the Comoro market and Bairro Pite. Gang-related violence has occurred often in Dili, and Americans risk intentional or inadvertent injury when traveling in affected areas. Criminals have been known to operate illegal checkpoints for taxis and minibuses in some areas of Dili. American citizens are advised against using taxis or minibuses for transportation. Americans remaining in Timor-Leste despite this warning should monitor the media for updates on the safety and security situation and check the status of flights before traveling to the airport.

¶5. The Government of Australia has advised its citizens to reconsider their need to travel to Timor-Leste and warns that Australians and Australian interests may be specifically targeted. Attackers could indiscriminately target foreigners, including Americans. The Australian travel advice may be viewed at <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/EastTimor>.

¶6. Americans in Timor-Leste should immediately register at the U.S. Embassy and obtain all recent messages sent to the American community in country. The U.S. Embassy in Dili may be reached at 670-332-4684 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. local time, or one may call the duty officer at 670-723-1328 outside business hours. The Embassy's new website may be viewed at <http://timor-leste.usembassy.gov>. The U.S. Embassy is located on Avenida de Portugal in the Pantai Kelapa area. U.S. citizens living in or traveling to Timor-Leste may also

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register through the State Department's travel registration website,
<https://travelregistration.state.gov>.

¶7. For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov/>, where the current Worldwide Cautions, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings may be found. Travelers should also consult the Department of State's latest Country Specific Information for Timor-Leste. Current information on security may also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada. Callers from other areas may call a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except on U.S. federal holidays).

¶8. Minimize considered.

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